NUMB. DXXXVIII.

The SPECTATOR.

Aut famam ſequere, aut ſibi convenientia finge. Hor.

Monday, November 17. 1712.

SUrprize is ſo much the Life of Stories, that every one aims at it who endeavours to pleaſe by telling them. Smooth Delivery, an elegant Choice of Words, and a ſweet Arrangement, are all beautifying *Graces*, but not the Particulars in this Point of Converſation which either long command the Attention, or ſtrike with the Violence of a ſudden Paſſion, or occaſion the Burſt of Laughter which accompanies Humour. I have ſometimes fancy'd, that the Mind is in this Caſe like a Traveller who ſees a fine Seat in Haſte; he acknowledges the Delightfulneſs of a Walk ſet with Regularity, but wou'd be uneaſy if he were oblig'd to pace it over, when the firſt View had let him into all its Beauties from one End to the other.

However, a Knowledge of the Succeſs which Stories will have when they are attended with a Turn of Surprize, as it has happily made the Characters of ſome, ſo has it alſo been the Ruine of the Characters of others. There is a Sett of Men who outrage Truth, inſtead of affecting us with a Manner in telling it; who over-leap the Line of Probability, that they may be ſeen to move out of the common Road; and endeavour only to make their Hearers ſtare, by impoſing upon them with a kind of Nonſenſe againſt the Philoſophy of Nature, or ſuch a Heap of Wonders told upon their own Knowledge, as it is not likely one Man ſhou'd ever have met with.

I have been led to this Obſervation by a Company into which I fell accidentally. The Subject of *Antipathies* was a proper Field wherein ſuch falſe Surprizers might expatiate, and there were thoſe preſent who appear'd very fond to ſhew it in its full Extent of traditional Hiſtory. Some of them, in a learned Manner, offer'd to our Conſideration the miraculous Powers which the Effluviums of Cheeſe have over Bodies whoſe Pores are diſpos'd to receive them in a noxious Manner; others gave an Account of ſuch who cou'd indeed bear the Sight of Cheeſe, but not the Taſte; for which they brought a Reaſon from the Milk of their Nurſes. Others again diſcours'd, without endeavouring at Reaſons, concerning an unconquerable Averſion which ſome Stomachs have againſt a Joint of Meat when it is whole, and the eager Inclination they have for it when, by its being cut up, the Shape which had affected them is alter'd. From hence they paſs'd to Eels, then to Parſnips, and ſo from one Averſion to another, till we had work'd up our ſelves to ſuch a Pitch of Complaiſance, that when the Dinner was to come in, we enquir'd the Name of every Diſh, and hop'd it wou'd be no Offence to any in Company, before it was admitted. When we had ſate down, this Civility amongſt us turn'd the Diſcourſe from Eatables to other Sorts of Averſions; and the eternal Cat, which plagues every Converſation of this Nature, began then to engroſs the Subject. One had ſweated at the Sight of it, another had ſmell'd it out as it lay conceal'd in a very diſtant Cupboard, and he who crown'd the whole Set of theſe Stories, reckon'd up the Number of Times in which it had occaſion'd him to ſwound away: At laſt, ſays he, that you may all be ſatisfy'd of my invincible Averſion to a Cat, I ſhall give an unanſwerable Inſtance; As I was going through a Street of *London*, where I never had been till then, I felt a general Damp and a Faintneſs all over me, which I could not tell how to account for, till I chanced to caſt my Eyes upwards, and found that I was paſſing under a Sign-poſt on which the Picture of a Cat was hung.

The Extravagance of this Turn in the way of Surprize, gave a Stop to the Talk we had been carrying on: Some were ſilent becauſe they doubted, and others becauſe they were conquer'd in their own Way; ſo that the Gentleman had Opportunity to preſs the Belief of it upon us, and let us ſee that he was rather expoſing himſelf than ridiculing others.

I muſt freely own that I did not all this while diſbelieve every thing that was ſaid; but yet I thought ſome in the Company had been endeavouring who ſhould pitch the Bar furtheſt; that it had for ſome Time been a meaſuring Caſt, and at laſt my Friend of the Cat and Sign-poſt had thrown beyond them all.

I then conſider'd the Manner in which this Story had been received, and the Poſſibility that it might have paſs'd for a Jeſt upon others, if he had not labour'd againſt himſelf. From hence, thought I, there are two Ways which the well-bred World generally takes to correct ſuch a Practice, when they do not think fit to contradict it flatly.

The firſt of theſe is a general Silence, which I would not adviſe any one to interpret in his own Behalf. It is often the Effect of Prudence in avoiding a Quarrel, when they ſee another drive ſo faſt, that there is no ſtopping him without being run againſt, and but very ſeldom the Effect of Weakneſs in believing ſuddenly. The Generality of Mankind are not ſo groſſly ignorant as ſome over-bearing Spirits would perſwade themſelves; and if the Authority of a Character or a Caution againſt Danger make us ſuppreſs our Opinions, yet neither of theſe are of Force enough to ſuppreſs our Thoughts of them. If a Man who has endeavoured to amuſe his Company with Improbabilities could but look into their Minds, he would find that they imagine he lightly eſteems of their Senſe when he thinks to impoſe upon them, and that he is leſs eſteemed by them for his Attempt in doing ſo. His Endeavour to glory at their Expence becomes a Ground of Quarrel, and the Scorn and Indifference with which they entertain it begins the immediate Puniſhment. And indeed (if we ſhould even go no further) Silence, or a negligent Indifference, has a deeper Way of Wounding than Oppoſition; becauſe Oppoſition proceeds from an Anger that has a Sort of generous Sentiment for the Adverſary mingling along with it,

while

while it shews that there is some Esteem in your Mind for him; in short, that you think him worth while to contest with: But Silence, or a negligent Indifference, proceeds from Anger, mixed with a Scorn that shews another he is thought by you too contemptible to be regarded.

The other Method which the World has taken for correcting this Practice of false Surprize, is to over-shoot such Talkers in their own Bow, or to raise the Story with further Degrees of Impossibility, and set up for a Voucher to them in such a Manner as must let them see they stand detected. Thus I have heard a Discourse was once managed upon the Effects of Fear. One of the Company had given an Account how it had turned his Friend's Hair grey in a Night, while the Terrors of a Ship-wreck encompass'd him. Another taking the Hint from hence, began, upon his own Knowledge, to enlarge his Instances of the like Nature to such a Number, that it was not probable he could ever have met with them; and as he still grounded these upon different Causes, for the sake of Variety, it might seem at last, from his Share of the Conversation, almost impossible that any one who can feel the Passion of Fear should all his Life escape so common an Effect of it. By this Time some of the Company grew negligent, or desirous to contradict him: But one rebuked the rest with an Appearance of Severity, and, with the known old Story in his Head, assured them they need not scruple to believe that the Fear of any thing can make a Man's Hair grey, since he knew one whose Perriwig had suffered so by it. Thus he stopp'd the Talk, and made them easy. Thus is the same Method taken to bring us to Shame which we fondly take to encrease our Character, It is indeed a kind of Mimickry by which another puts on our Air of Conversation to shew us to our selves: He seems to look ridiculous before you, that you may remember how near a Resemblance you bear to him, or that you may know he will not lie under the Imputation of believing you. Then it is that you are struck dumb immediately with a conscientious Shame for what you have been saying: Then it is that you are inwardly grieved at the Sentiments which you cannot but perceive others entertain concerning you. In short, you are against your self; the Laugh of the Company runs against you; the censuring World is oblig'd to you for, that Triumph which you have allow'd them at your own Expence; and Truth, which you have injured, has a near Way of being reveng'd on you, when by the bare Repetition of your Story you become a frequent Diversion for the Publick.

I am, Sir, your Servant.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

THE other Day walking in *Pancras* Church-yard, I thought of your Paper wherein you mention Epitaphs, and am of Opinion this has a Thought in it worth being communicated to your Readers,

Here Innocence and Beauty lies, whose Breath
Was snatch'd by early, not untimely Death.
Hence did she go just as she did begin
Sorrow to know, before she knew to sin.
Death, that does Sin and Sorrow thus prevent,
Is the next Blessing to a Life well spent.

By Her Majesty's Company of Comedians.

AT the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane, this present Monday, being the 17th of November, will be presented a Comedy, call'd Volpone, or, The Fox: Written by Ben. Johnson, All the Parts disposed the best Advantage. By Her Majesty's Command no Persons are to be admitted behind the Scenes.

Lost or mislaid one Bond for 100 *l.* dated Sept. 15, 1708. another of 100 l. dated the 30th ditto, one Note of 16 l. dated the 18th of March, all Three sign'd by the same Man, and one Receipt for 10 l. Contribution-Money, with other Papers. Whoever will bring them to the Temple-Exchange Coffee house, shall have 10 s. Reward, being of no Use to any but the Owner, Payment being stopt.

There is now ready for the Press, and will be printed by Subscription, a Book intituled,

Notitia Academiæ Oxonienſis, Vetus & Nova; or, The Ancient and Modern State of the University of Oxford, containing, 1st, An Account of its Antiquity, past Government, and Sufferings from the Danes and other People, both Foreign and Domestick, &c. 2dly, An Account of its Colleges, Halls, and publick Buildings, of their Founders and especial Benefactors, the Laws, Statutes and Privileges relating thereunto in general, and of their Visitor, and their Power. 3dly, An Account of the Laws, Statutes and Privileges of the University, and such of the Laws of the Realm which anywise concern the same, together with an Abstract of several Royal Grants and Charters given to the said University, and the Sense and Opinion of the Lawyers thereupon; to which is added The Method of Proceeding in the Chancellor's Court, &c. By John Ayliffe, LL. D. and Fellow of New-College in Oxford. This Book will be printed in a Vol. 8vo. the Whole, as 'tis computed, amounting to about 70 Sheets, and the Price to Subscribers will be 10 s. for the 2 Volumes in Sheets, whereof 5 to be paid in Hand, and 5 upon Delivery of the Book, which will be in August next. Those who subscribe for Six shall have a Seventh Gratis. Subscriptions are taken in by H. Clements, at the Half-Moon in St. Paul's Church yard, and E. Sanger, at the Post-House next the Middle-Temple: Also by H. Clements and S. Fletcher, Booksellers in Oxford, and E. Jeffery, Bookseller in Cambridge, untill the 21st of December next. Note, There will be no more printed than are subscribed for.

Just Published,

The Danger and Folly of evil Courses; being a Practical Discourse, shewing the base and vile Nature of Sin, and the dreadful Consequences of it, as well in this World, as that which is to come; With such effectual Remedies, as, if rightly applied, will prevent it, and bring Men to a true Love of God and Religion. Partly extracted from the Writings of Abp. Tillotson, Abp. Sharpe, Bp. Taylor, Bp. Stillingfleet, Bp. Patrick, Dr. Scott, Dr. Horneck, Dr. Lucas, Dr. Sherlock, Dr. Stanhope, Mr. Kettlewell, Judge Hale, &c. By Francis Hewerdine, Presbyter of the Church of England. Printed for Daniel Brown at the Black Swan without Temple-Bar. Where may be had, An Essay to the Poets, By B. Morrice: As also his Amusements in Verse and Prose.

Just Publish'd,

The Restoration of all Things, or a Vindication of the Goodness and Love of God, to be manifested at last in the Recovery of his whole Creation out of their Fall. Sold by J. Woodward in Scalding-Ally near Stocks-Market, and J. Morphew near Stationers-Hall, of whom may be had a compleat Volume of the Memoirs for the Curious, viz. from Jan. 1707 to Dec. 1708. containing an Abstract of the most valuable things that happened in that Time, and among others the Lives of Prince Lewis of Baden, D. of Devonshire, L. Cutts, Dr. Sherlock, Dr. Drake, Dr. Brown, Mr. White, Monsieur du Hamel, Secretary to the French Academy of Sciences, Interspersed with several Discourses on Trade, Mathematicks, Law, Physick, Poetry, and other useful and diverting Subjects. By several Hands, Price 6 s. And a Perswasive to Moderation and Forbearance in Love amongst the divided Forms of Christians, &c. To which is added Particulars for our Converse with Men, &c. By the late Mr. Wh----te. Price 2 s.

Just Publish'd,

The Barrier-Treaty vindicated. Wherein is shewn the Necessity of securing the Protestant Succession by a foreign Alliance, and the Reasonableness of granting the States such a Barrier as is stipulated in this Treaty; and all the Objections against the Treaty, particularly that of its being prejudicial to the Commerce of Great Britain, are fully answered. Printed for A. Baldwin, near the Oxford-Arms in Warwick-Lane.

I underwritten do declare, That my Child being under so great an Agony of Pain by its breeding of Teeth, that strong Convulsion Fits ensued thereupon, insomuch that, notwithstanding the use of several Means, its Life was wholly despair'd of; but at last, upon the Application of that famous Remedy prepared for those Purposes by Mr. Perroner, Surgeon, in Dyot-street near Bloomsbury, I thank God my Child was quickly restored to perfect Ease and Health. Witness my Hand, J. Sutman, at the Golden Key in Princes-street by St Ann's Church, Brazier. This said Medicine is sold at 2 s. 6 d. per Viol, by the Author aforesaid; Mr. Alcraft, at the Blue-Coat Boy against the Royal-Exchange in Cornhill; Mr. Lillie, Perfumer, the Corner of Beauford-Buildings in the Strand, and by Mr. Watkins, Tobacconist, King-street, Westminster.

A Regular Physician that has travelled and seen as much of the Venereal Practice, both here and abroad, as perhaps any one, thinks it may be of Service to inform the Publick, that he has discovered one Medicine (a Panacea) that never yet failed curing those inveterate Runnings or Owzings, after ill-cured Injuries (where the Malignity is eradicated) that are look'd upon incurable, as also Seminal Effusions, and consuming Weepings of the Spermatick Vessels, and Parts contiguous. It performs by corroborating and restoring the Tone of the Parts, which having been deliberated, and lost their Springiness by over-purging, the Use of hot attenuating Medicines, or other Force upon Nature, is the general Cause of those Weaknesses. Where the Weakness has not been of long standing one Pot will perform the Cure, but where it has, it may require two, or at the most three, but then none will be disappointed, if they dare take the Word of a Stranger, who is yet a Man of Credit, and may at a convenient Season set his Name to this Advertisement, and inform the Publick of some further Secrets which he has found out for the Cure of those other obstinate Venereal Maladies, that puzzle the Efforts of the greatest Physicians. This Panacea is as innocent as Bread, agreeable to the Taste, and requires no Confinement. He has left it to be disposed of at Mr. Lovel's, at the Sign of the Patten and Perriwig over-against Great Suffolk-street near Charing-Cross, at a Guinea a Pot, sealed up, with plain and satisfactory Directions, whereby any one may know their Case, and whether they have any Malignity or not.

LONDON: Printed for *S. Buckley* and *J. Tonson*, and Sold by